



**Governor's Forest Health OVERSIGHT Council Meeting**  
**November 13, 2003 – 1:30 PM**  
**Northern Arizona University, du Bois Center – Freemont Room**

## MINUTES

Members in Attendance:

Co-Chair	Diane Vosick, Ecological Restoration Institute
Co-Chair	Rep. Tom O'Halleran, Arizona House of Representatives
	Lori Faeth, Governor's Office Policy Advisor
	Alexious C. Becenti. Sr., Navajo Forestry Department
	Joe Donaldson, City of Flagstaff
	Bob Moffat, White Mt. Regional Development Corp.
	Michael Neal, APS
	Todd Schulke, Center for Biological Diversity
	Rob Smith, Sierra Club
	Darrell Willis, City of Prescott

Proxy Attendees: None

Absent: Steve Campbell, Ron Christensen, Richard Collison, Don Foster, Kirk Rowdabaugh, Thomas Swetnam, Mike Somerville

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1. Meeting called to order at 9:35 a.m.
  2. Approval of minutes from last meeting
  3. Introductions
  4. Endorsement of Guiding Principles
    - \*Diane Vosick: provided history of principle development
    - \*Motion to approve Guiding Principles-- approved unanimously
  5. Preliminary recommendation from Council to review and resolve the creation of a state office for forest management, to be operated under the State Forester.
    - Responsibilities of the Office:** To deal with issues related to monitoring, database, forest health research, public safety and education outreach coordination, coordination of federal/state/local/private entities, wildfire risk production planning, and prioritization of fire products. Also, to help keep the public involved with forest health issues.
    - Discussion:** it needs to be stated that all research is sound and scientific. Make this a preliminary recommendation to the Governor.
    - Questions:** Are these aspects of the proposal already enacted? (yes and no: it depends on the specific issue.) Is it possible to get it all written up and then review it at the next meeting (no: this is a timing issue and it is only a preliminary request.) Can we see how this ties in with homeland

security? (yes: we can incorporate this concern with public safety and outreach.)

**Motion to approve the Preliminary Recommendation pending review by Monday—approved unanimously**

6. Subcommittee Reports

\*Zoning and Implementation (Darrell Willis): State of Arizona Fire code (minimum standard set in 1988 as a uniform fire code) First step is adopting a new fire code that is current and updated to protect private property.

**Comments:** Public outreach programs will be developed to make sure the public is fully part of this process. In the past there has been an objection to a set standard of codes. The state and local governments need to be involved in this process. A list of high-risk areas needs to be developed (there will be different requirements within those specific zones.) We must present a balanced presentation of cost (i.e.: home insurance increases, loss of property values if a fire occurs, local economy, etc.) Because of the Aspen fire, we began to see what other states had a minimum general fire code and Pennsylvania was the only one who has; meaning, this would be “cutting edge” for Arizona to do this. We need to develop a policy for more assistance for communities who have adopted and define the WUI areas near them (i.e.: make more grant money available to these communities.) We can only help communities that want help (i.e.: we can give them the tools to improve but can not make them do it.)

**Questions:** What is the process for implementation? (The uniform fire code may be interpreted in a consistent manner across multiple parties.) How will WUI be defined? (First recommendation is to establish a minimum general fire code, the second recommendation is to define the WUI.) Have the communities been identified on the federal registry? (yes: the list is being updated and high priorities are being established in the state of Arizona.) Are we confident with the direction this sub-committee is going? (yes: a tremendous amount of work has been done.)

**Final discussion:** this issue will be continued during the retreat.

**Road Access Discussion:** lot splits are a problem and result in sub-standard roads. The current statute has not been currently utilized by all of the counties (minimal requirements for access roads.) The group is working towards the development of lot split specifications that results in better roads to help fight fire. \*\*See handout\*\* Request for a recommendation by the next meeting for roadways (request made to Mayor Donaldson.)

\*Utilization and Commerce: Sub-committee has met twice since last meeting to determine product development that is sensitive to the ecology of this area. Working to bring players together to work with the White Mountain Region to help develop the economy in the area while being sensitive to watershed management and forest health issues. Request: have Rob Davis come in and talk about the advancement and adaptation of the pellet industry to use small diameter trees (**Corey**)

\*Legislative: nobody was present to report

7. FIREWISE Program in Arizona (overview and presentation provided by Dustie Ayler): \*\*see presentation handouts\*\*

**Topics discussed:** Who is the Arizona Firewise Sub-Committee; who composes this sub-committee; what is FIREWISE; FIREWISE objectives; how the target audiences are identified; what the workshop can do for the participants; how the program is funded; where workshops occur.

**Questions:** how does a community become a FIREWISE community (there are five criteria that must be met.) How many communities are FIREWISE? (unknown). How is a community defined? (It starts with a homeowner, then it spreads and the community must do it as a whole—not just one person can do it. There is an application process and a planning process. 85% or so must meet the standard. Money from the community must be spent to meet FIREWISE standards.) Is FIREWISE a process or is it a set of standards that must be met to get certified? (The workshop must be attended and then the community must abide by standards set by the FIREWISE program (i.e.: certain types of vegetation must be cleared from the houses, access to water, etc.) How can the FIREWISE name be used? (It must be used with the official working group of FIREWISE--- you must be careful where you use the FIREWISE logo.) When an older community adapts to this process, is there a period of time that must be abided to for changes? (yes; see [www.firewise.org](http://www.firewise.org) for requirements.) Has the FIREWISE program compiled a list that compares communities who are FIREWISE and have been threatened by fire and those who have not—did the FIREWISE program work to protect the communities? (yes.)

**Comments:** FIREWISE adds approximately \$50,000 in value to each lot that is classified as FIREWISE in Flagstaff, Arizona.

8. Congressionally funded Forest Land Enhancement Program (Al Hendricks: Arizona State Land Department, [alhendricks@azsatefire.org](mailto:alhendricks@azsatefire.org)) \*\*see handouts\*\*

**Questions:** Why is the cost increasing? (The amount of people who have the equipment to do the work is becoming less and less.) What is the bill number? (this will be given to Corey.) Why did Arizona get such a low amount of money? (Arizona actually did well this year, it may be 21% this time.) How many requests did you get for funding? (Approximately 12, but for more money than we have.) If we have such a large demand, why don't we get more money from the source? (There is more private forest land in other areas of the US.) Is there a certain minimum acreage to participate? (no minimum in the legislative or the guidelines that the Forest Service developed; however, in Arizona it is a 10 acre minimum for individual landowners or a group of landowners in the same area.) Is any priority for what type of land will be treated? (no, undeveloped acreages are treated all of the time.)

**Comments:** This group should be advocating this program because this type of money is hard to come by. Recommendation that the legislative sub-committee start to work on this process, identify what programs the funds have been shifted towards, and begin working with the congressional delegation to help them understand prevention (thinning and NEPA) vs. suppression. There is only so much money with many programs that need the money; we must try to offset the cost of treating by utilizing the materials that are present (i.e.: some type of marketing opportunity.)

**Request:** a list of applicants who have been funded or rejected and what type of land they had.

9. Community Safety Education Program

**Comments:** This program needs to be implemented by March (safety issues and public safety to be completed.) The City Council, building inspectors, and Planning and Zoning need to be brought up to full speed on coding and other fire issues (since the FIREWISE program takes time to implement, this should be done in the meantime.) This topic will be discussed at the retreat. We should go beyond the education program, rather we should develop a program to engage and collaborate the governmental officials and the public (see New Mexico model.) There should be an educational process for writing grants so everyone has the same chance of getting the money. APS can put some horsepower behind this effort.

10. Future Agenda Items and Meetings

December 11, 2003 in Payson, Arizona.

There will be a meeting every Friday for all of the Chairs.

The retreat will occur around the week of December 11<sup>th</sup> in Payson, Arizona starting at 10:00 am.

11. Public Announcements

\*Lew Levenson (?): Education is not effective because of poor perception.

There will not be money available until people accurately perceive what the fire problem really is.

\*Sharon Gilbreath with the Southwest Forest Alliance: More money needs to hit the ground for thinning not for forest research, as was done with the past committee. Prioritize for getting things done on the ground.

12. Committee Announcements

On February 17, 2003, the Wildfire Summit will occur in Phoenix, Arizona.

On March 10, 2003, the Governor's Wildfire and Safety Conference will occur.

Meeting adjourned at 11:58 am.